Cecilia Leong-Salobir (ed.), *Routledge Handbook of Food in Asia*. London and New York: Routledge, 2019, xiii + 342 pp. ISBN: 9781138669918, price: GBP 175.00 (hard-cover).

By now, most readers are likely aware of how diverse, prolific, and exciting the field of Food Studies has become over the past decade. Publications on food in Asia have also been increasing. Cecilia Leong-Salobir, a driving force behind Food Studies in Asia through her monographs, book chapters, journal articles, has now edited the volume under review here, published with Routledge, which has been active in advancing the field.

The book consists of an introduction and 22 chapters, divided into the following five categories: *Food, Identity, and Diasporic communities*; *Food Rites and Rituals*; *Food and the Media*; *Food and Health*; and *Food and State Matters*. Some chapters highlight food practices of the classical or colonial past, some focus on the digital present, while others explore the diachronic connections between them. The book's most prominent motif describes and explores the ways that the culinary landscapes of Asian, and Asian-descended communities, have been influenced and transformed by colonization, globalization, and migration. Through a variety of different methodologies and theoretical approaches, the volume provides insight into what people eat, how they eat it, and it traces the ways that food, ideas about food, and patterns of consumption have evolved. The targeted readership is diverse, encompassing students and scholars of anthropology, sociology, world history, food history, cultural studies, and Asian Studies (and—I would add—gender studies and media studies).

As readers know, the category of “Asia”—with its notoriously fluid boundaries—is vulnerable to critiques and problematization. The *Routledge Handbook of Food in Asia* has set out to be pretty expansive but not comprehensive, focusing primarily on North Asia (Japan, Korea, and China), South Asia, and Southeast Asia. It also pays attention to migrant communities with roots in these regions. Central and West Asia fall beyond its purview. As the editor points out (p. 2), Japan is amply represented in the book, largely reflecting the excellent work of food scholars on (and in) Japan. One might also point out that many contributors are based in Australia, but in my view, this has not reduced in any way the diversity of topics covered and perspectives embraced. I was pleasantly surprised to find Southeast Asia well-represented, as this region does not always receive due attention in global Food Studies.

Restrictions of space prevent me from discussing the entire book with the level of detail it arguably deserves. The readers of this journal will presumably be most interested in the chapters that (partly) deal with Southeast Asian food

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practices, of which there are 12. A handbook might not be the best format to let chapters “speak to each other,” yet, as I hope to show in what follows, they display fertile ground for thematic exploration.

Cornelia Reiher’s *“Protect Agriculture and Food Safety!”: Transnational Protests Against Preferential Trade Agreements in East and Southeast Asia* (pp. 265–78) and Trent Brown’s *Contesting the Corporate Food Regime in South and Southeast Asia* (pp. 296–308) emphasize the importance of small-scale agricultural communities to social mobilization amid global structures of corporate power. Southeast Asian food practices have long been incorporated into global supply networks, as is further discussed in Nicole Tarulevicz’s *Untouched by Human Hands: Making and Marketing Milk in Singapore, 1900–2007* (pp. 193–206) and Nicholas Tošaj’s *Finding France in Flour: Communicating Colonialism in French Indochina Through Bread* (pp. 29–38). It is clear, especially from the latter chapter, that colonialism and the consumption of “European” food created new hierarchies and modes of exclusion, often defined along the lines of race and class. At present, too, practices of (mis)representing and exoticizing Asian cuisines remain commonplace. In *Feasting on ‘the Other’: Performing Authenticity and Commodifying Difference in Celebrity Chefs’ Food and Travel Television Programmes*, Jacqui Kong offers a much-needed critique of “food adventuring” in popular travel programmes, calling attention to colonially saturated portrayals of Penang and New York’s Chinatown by television chefs.

Yet encounters with and between Southeast Asia’s culinary landscapes also provide economic and educational opportunities. Rick Flowers and Elaine Swan’s *‘Sauce in the Bowl, Not on Your Shirt’: Food Pedagogy and Aesthetics in Vietnamese Ethnic Food Tours to Cabramatta, Sydney* (pp. 222–36) highlights how Vietnamese-Australian “culinary tour guides” educate visitors on the aesthetics of food served in racialized suburbs. Jean Duruz’s *Geographies of Fusion: Re-imagining Singaporean and Malaysian Food in Global Cities of the West* (pp. 13–28) investigates what happens when already-mixed cuisines of Southeast Asia travel to multi-ethnic western cities such as Toronto, where they encounter differently mixed tastes and forge new spaces and identities. Donna Lee Brien’s *Food Writing and Culinary Tourism in Singapore* (pp. 163–75) explores how writing about Singapore’s gastronomically oriented tourism opens up a broad range of culinary experiences of locals as well as guests. In different ways, these chapters illustrate what has happened and what could happen when Southeast Asian cuisines encounter other foodscapes.

The culinary landscapes of Southeast Asia have been shaped by different sorts of mobilities, some of recent pedigree. Hongyan Yang’s *Cooking in the Hmong Cultural Kitchen* (pp. 89–106) explores the ways Hmong-American families readapt their kitchen spaces for traditional cooking, reshaping the sen-

social experiences of life in the diaspora. The detailed illustrations in this refreshing chapter of Hmong-American kitchens remind me of those of first-generation Eurasians and Moluccans who moved from Indonesia to the Netherlands in the 1950s. Paula Arvela's *Searching for Culinary Footprints: A Question of Cultural Identity—Kristang Foodways and the Portuguese Culinary Legacy in Melaka* (pp. 73–88) investigates how cultural identities are produced and performed through eating, cooking, and food narratives among Malaysia's Portuguese-descended Gente Kristang community. Their cuisine has become a site of entangled associations between Europe and Asia and deep affinities with those (imagined) geographies. The performative construction of difference—including in race, gender, and social class—is also well-documented in the foodscapes of colonial-era Indonesia, as Christina Nope-Williams demonstrates in *Food and Identity Construction: The Impact of Colonization in Indonesian Society* (pp. 58–72). Moving back to precolonial times, the ceremonial aspects of shared meals are examined by Jiří Ják in *Cooking for Demons, Soldiers, and Commoners: History of a Ritual Meal in Java* (pp. 127–38), which traces the much-debated history of the Javanese *slametan* by reading anthropological evidence against Old Javanese texts.

The book's 10-page concise introduction consists mostly of summaries of the chapters. At no point does it wander off in lengthy theoretical reflections, although some of the individual chapters do. As it turns out, other Routledge volumes on Food Studies contain equally modest introductions (Cheung & Tan 2007, Albala 2013). One wonders, then, what this says about the state of the field. What are the discussions, disagreements, and unsolved questions that animate Food Studies in Asia? Perhaps they have yet to emerge. Judging from the book's chapters, the complex relations between food practices and gender, cultural contact, and syncretism offer fruitful avenues for methodological sophistication, with Southeast Asia emerging as a key region of continued scholarly interest.

That, however, is not what the *Routledge Handbook of Food in Asia* sets out to uncover. As a handbook it is highly valuable, covering a wealth of issues through a wealth of examples. Previous volumes on Food Studies in Asia have prioritized specific disciplines, such as Cheung & Tan (2007) on anthropology, specific issues, such as Farrer (2015) on globalization, or specific regions, such as Kong & Sinha (2016) on Singapore. The present volume clearly casts its net wider. It brings together various academic disciplines and regions of Asia. And, perhaps most importantly, through its accessible style of writing it stimulates readers to look beyond their own areas of interest (for me, the chapters on Japan were particularly illuminating).

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